**Church members’ Finance Report (April 2020) covering the three month period to 31st March 2020.**

We have had a good start to the year in terms of offerings. Against a budget of £81,000 for the first three months of the year, we have received exactly £81,000. As I mentioned in the April newsletter the only significant impact on the church finances, due to the temporary closure of the church building, is the loss of the “blue bag” offerings from the Sunday services. We receive about £1,100 every Sunday from offerings collected in the blue bags (cash, cheques and envelopes), which is £5,000 per month and is not insignificant. We have therefore updated the church website to give people guidance as to how they can continue to give to the church, if they wish to do so, whilst the Sunday services are postponed.

We “lost” two Sunday services in March due to the Coronavirus, although the fact that March was a 5 Sunday month (the 1st March being a Sunday) helped to keep offerings on budget. We do, however, envisage a drop in offerings over the coming months as the church building remains closed. April is the first month of full closure and, whilst it is too early to accurately assess the exact impact on offerings, we are expecting to see a drop in offering’s of between £2,000 and £3,000 per month. We are truly grateful to the large number of people who have either changed their method of giving, sent cheques or increased their monthly giving to help us through this unusual time.

As regards the detailed finances for the first three months of the year, total income received of £87,000 is running 1.3% (£1,100) behind budget and 9.1 % (£8,700) behind last year. This, however, is a misleading picture year on year, as it is distorted by the fact that last year we received an unusual payment of £2,000 in January, which was a specific donation to the men’s safe house, and also March 2019 offerings were unusually high (£33,400) due to a number of large one off payments.

The 12 month rolling average for total offerings (the slide I present at the Members' meeting) has dropped slightly to £26,700, but is still an increase of 6.5% on last year's rolling average.

As regards expenditure, total expenditure to date is £115,400, which is £5,600 over budget. This overspend is due to the phasing of the budget for the expenditure on the new chairs for the main hall and will be caught back over the course of the year. Taking income and expenditure together gives us an overall deficit after three months of £28,400 against a budgeted deficit of £21,600. This deficit is expected to grow to circa £36,000 by May but we will then receive our Gift Aid tax refund of £70,000.

Over the last few weeks Chris Follett has spent many hours compiling our Gift Aid return to the government, and this year we expect to receive around £70,000 back from the government. Chris has also been busy preparing the individual letters for all those that have made offerings to the church this year. Normally you would have picked up your letter from the 'Blue Drawers' in the church foyer but, unfortunately, the church building is closed. If, however, you would like a physical copy, then do let Chris Follett know and he will then scan the letter and will forward it to you by email or will send it by post. Many thanks to Chris for all he does in dealing with the finances of the church.

In summary, we have had a good start to the year, which is a real blessing, but we are envisaging a shortfall in income in the coming months as the loss of Sunday services and the subsequent loss of offerings collected in the blue bags begins to negatively affect our income position.

***The Lord continues to uphold us with His righteous right hand***

**Craig Rowland**